The Effort Was Only Just Worth It! The School Production Experience of Teachers in a New Zealand Primary School

Abstract

This study reports on a case study, which investigated the experiences of teachers and students involved in the development of a school production in a New Zealand primary school. The production process utilized inquiry-based learning and integrated learning approaches to produce an original performance based on the school’s history. Rather than outline the creative process itself, the study looked at the social and personal experience of the participants. The experiences of students are reported elsewhere. This article reports on the experiences of the teachers involved in what was, for most, an unfamiliar experience. Data was gathered via interviews and questionnaires carried out at the start and end of the process. Findings were that teachers in this case largely operated from a thematic understanding of integration and this informed their thinking about how to approach the devising task. Teachers responded in different ways to the challenges arising – including the issue of how to balance student ownership and control with matters of quality and pressures of time. All teachers found the process demanding and stressful and found they responded to this in different ways. All, however, felt the experience was worthwhile and the outcome valuable to them and the students.

Introduction

It is not unusual for primary school teachers to find themselves either offering or conscripted to undertake a school production, especially in instances where the school views such enterprises as a way of showcasing its talent. However, as we will describe below, the teacher’s experience of taking responsibility for a school production has not been widely researched, in New Zealand or elsewhere.

The particular school production reported on here was undertaken by Woody Valley Primary School[i], a relatively multicultural school nestled at the base of the Waitakere Mountains to the west of Auckland, New Zealand. The show was a devised work based on local history, and was entitled Mokoroa: Guardian of the Valley.

Like many primary schools, Woody Valley had regularly engaged its senior classes in the production of school shows. In the past, this had involved purchasing the rights to a script and music of a show written for children, with children being cast in roles and staff taking on roles of director, musical director, stage manager, choreographer, and so on. The aim for Mokoroa was different. This time, teachers and senior pupils collaboratively devised the show as an outcome of an inquiry process that integrated a range of curriculum strands.

The goal of the production was to draw on the distinct history and cultural heritages of the local area, including traditional Maori perspectives[ii] and the experiences of Dalmatian settlers from the 1800s. The production process was designed so that community representatives of cultural groups were consulted as part of the inquiry process. In the event, the process also involved collaboration with professional drama practitioners who acted as
mentors for the latter stages of the production process. *Mokoroa: Guardian of the Valley* was staged in September 2010.

The authors were approached by teachers at the school to gather data on the production process. The aim was to investigate the hopes, expectations and anxieties these teachers had prior to their embarking on an innovative school production enterprise as well as their reflections on the process they engaged in to bring this enterprise to fruition. We also sought to discover how some of their pupils responded to the challenges that were put to them as both learners and performers. The original invitation to us to implement a study was made by the music specialist (Wanda), who had a major coordinating role in the production and is married to one of the researchers. Her invitation was endorsed by the four Year 5/6 syndicate teachers who were keen to have the process investigated so as to maximize its potential for professional learning. This was case study rather than action research, so the research set out to investigate the teachers’ experiences and processes rather than seeking to carry out an intervention. The one exception to this was that at one stage in the rehearsal process, a workshop in scriptwriting was offered by one of the researchers (Locke) in response to an invitation from the teachers. Other than this, the research process was focused on observing the process from outside.

Rather than investigating the devising process or the performance itself, our research focussed on the participants’ accounts of their educational and personal experiences of the production process. The perspectives of students have been addressed in another paper.[iii] This current article focuses on the reported experiences of five teachers involved. Lynette, Rachel, Pauline and Ingrid (pseudonyms) were four generalist classroom teachers within the senior school. Their responsibility within the production was to support children in their class to research and devise two scenes to contribute to the production’s overall design. Wanda (pseudonym) was the school’s music specialist and worked with the senior students to generate musical “interludes”, which played between scenes.

**Research context and design**

Case study was considered the most appropriate methodology for this study. As Yin (1989) points out, case study research can be (a) exploratory (description and analysis leading to the development of hypotheses), (b) descriptive (providing narrative accounts and rich vignettes of practice) and (c) explanatory (offering causal explanations of the impact of various interventions. This case study was primarily exploratory, with scope for the explanatory.

Case studies allow for an in depth investigation into specific instances with a view to developing or illustrating general instances. This project investigated five teachers’ experiences of a process that entailed considerable risk for them. The generalist teachers along with their classes were each charged with devising two scenes for the production, based on two local history/heritage topics that were the object of their class inquiry. The fifth teacher (Wanda) was the school’s music specialist and was responsible for developing an original composition with students as the production’s overture and for devising a series of interludes, serving to link the classes’ scenes. The overall shape of production, *Mokoroa: Guardian of the Valley*, as finally presented can be found in Appendix 3. All pupils in the senior school (108) were involved in at least one scene or were involved in the interludes as Turehu (mythical Maori forest fairies) and were research subjects.
The production process as originally designed by staff had five phases:

1. A concept, scenario and timeframe was developed and adopted (teacher focus).
2. An allocation of responsibilities was decided upon (teacher, wider staff and community focus).
3. A class-based process of inquiry was instituted, aimed at fleshing out the production scenario and identifying potentially “dramatic” material (teacher and pupil focus).
4. Eight-minute scenes and complementary interludes were developed, rehearsed, resourced and staged (teacher, pupil, wider staff and community focus).
5. The production process was reflected on systematically by all stake-holders.

As part of the formal ethical approval process, letters of invitation explaining the aims of the project, their role in the research and their rights, were given to all prospective participants, staff and pupils (and their parents), and their consent obtained. The principal was consulted from the start and interviewed. Responsibility for carrying out the interviews was shared between both researchers except for Wanda’s interview where for ethical reasons, the researcher with family ties to Wanda did not participate in the interview. For similar reasons, throughout the data analysis and writing up of findings, this researcher focused on the findings related to children’s learning, with the other researcher taking a lead role in the teacher-related material.

The overall research questions were fairly broad. The four questions that relate to this article are shown below:

1. How does a small sample of primary teachers of Year 5/6 classes view curriculum integration?
2. How does a small sample of primary teachers of Year 5/6 classes view inquiry-based learning?
3. What hopes and anxieties do a small sample of primary teachers of Year 5/6 classes have at the prospect of developing a scene on a given topic for an integrated school production?
4. What do a small sample of primary teachers of Year 5/6 classes identify as helpful in relation to their developing and producing a scene on a given topic for an integrated school production with their Year 5/6 pupils.

This was primarily qualitative research with a phenomenological emphasis, that is, it aimed to shed light on how major participants in a process experienced it. Insufficient quantitative data was collected to describe this as a true mixed methods study. However, there was scope for some data within the questionnaires to be analysed numerically.

Teachers were asked to complete an initial and post-production questionnaire (Appendix 1) and were interviewed individually at the completion of the production (Appendix 2). After transcription, the open questionnaire and focus interview data were initially separated question by question and then analysed for emergent themes and patterns within themes, question by question (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). These themes were then compared across questions. Likert-scale data within the questionnaires was analysed in a simple numerical way to identify which responses were prevalent.

Literature review
Teachers in this project were invited by the senior teachers in charge of the production to draw on inquiry-based learning as their main teaching approach when coming up with content for their devised scenes. Their unhesitantly positive response to this invitation is suggestive of the way inquiry-based learning has become “mainstream” in the New Zealand context, where to some extent the ground was prepared by work in relation to research skill by Gwen Gawith (1988), who used the term “action learning” and the inclusion of “processing information” as a process skill in English in the New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1994, see also Ministry of Education, 2007).

Like any concept, “inquiry-based learning” is empty until its “meaning potential” (Fairclough, 1992) is filled. Internationally, depending on how it is conceived, inquiry-based learning is both lauded and deplored. Harste (2011) describes how for many teachers, inquiry learning means six to nine weeks of learning in a certain way, where for him, inquiry learning is ‘a new way of conceptualizing schooling… an attitude’ (Harste, 2011). The lineage of inquiry in the educational thought of the likes of Dewey (1938), Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1986) is widely recognized, as is its connection with constructivism, a theory arguing that “students have to actively participate in the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of knowledge” (Mthethwa-Sommers, 2010, p. 55).

Early advocates of inquiry-based learning, such as Gordon Wells (1992, 1995) attempt to define it in terms of particular inquiry characteristics. In discussing the special character of the learning experience of a student, Nir, Wells (1995) highlighted: 1. The boy’s “intense engagement” – the fact that he cared about the question; 2. The fact that the impetus for inquiry was not a “clearly formulated statement of the problem” but rather a “puzzlement” or “wondering about something observed”; 3. “the way in which a real question transforms the manner in which one deals with new information” [Italics ours]; and 4. The role played by “communication with others” (pp. 241-2) which takes various forms, including consultation with more expert others and dissemination.

In his work with Chang-Wells (1992), there is a focus on the importance of learners actively “selecting and defining the activities” in order for the inquiry process to be both “challenging and motivating” and also in the nature of the support offered, particularly by a classroom teacher (p. 56). The need for balance and judgment in respect of proffered guidance on the one hand, and the encouragement of independence on the other, is a pervasive theme in inquiry-based learning literature. Wells and Chang-Wells address this issue by theorizing what they call “facilitative intervention” in what is still a meaning-making centred on the student (p. 57) and an emphasis on a teacher’s creating “a dialogic context (Bakhtin, 1981) in which meaning is co-constructed by teacher and students together” (p. 46).

Edelson, Gordin and Pea (1999) are a good example of researchers who argue a case for inquiry-based learning in science because “inquiry, the pursuit of open questions, is fundamental to the practice of science” and “science learning should be authentic to science practice” (p. 399). Like Wells, Edelson and colleagues make it clear that there are challenges to inquiry-based learning as a practice. They identify five: 1. Motivation; 2. Mastery of a range of appropriate investigation techniques; 3. A degree of content knowledge; 4. The “management of extended activities” and 5. The “practical constraints of the learning context” (pp. 399-400). Clearly, a number of these challenges demand that teachers resolve issues of support in terms of such aspects as degree, timeliness, negotiation, formative
feedback and sequencing (as in the issue of how learning can be scaffolded). Banchi and Bell’s response to the issue of scaffolding is to suggest a model of levels of inquiry, which they categorise as “confirmation, structured, guided, [and] open” (2008, p. 26), with each successive level marking increased independence on the part of the learner.

Arguments such as those made by Edelson et al have been challenged by Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006), who point out that school students are not equipped to duplicate the practice of real scientists. These researchers, arguing from a cognitive perspective, in part make a case against inquiry-based learning on the basis of its unproductive and unnecessary demands on short-term memory and the lack of empirical research supporting its use as a pedagogy. Their frontal assault on constructivism has been countered by Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chinn (2007), who challenge the “minimal guidance” description of problem-based or inquiry-based learning and highlight the role teacher guidance places in terms of both these related pedagogies (cf Lee, Greene, Odom, Schechter & Slatta 2004, pp. 9-10), who prefer the term “inquiry-guided learning”.

There is a growing literature on integrated learning as an umbrella approach to teaching and learning. As in other educational settings, the most recent New Zealand national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) provides opportunities for integrated learning. However, the how of integration is still a matter of debate and its efficacy is relatively under-researched (Fraser, 2000, Brough 2010, Dowden, 2006). In educational contexts, curriculum integration is often talked about in terms of thematic orientations and the need to contest traditional disciplinary boundaries. For example, James Beane (1995) notes that, “curriculum integration begins with the identification of organizing themes or centers for learning experiences” and “transcends subject-area and disciplinary identifications” (p. 619). However, there are other approaches that go beyond matters of programming and organization, and challenge the whole notion of ‘curriculum’ as a set of discrete ‘areas’ of learning to be ‘integrated’. Abbott, for example, prefers to characterize the drama-based Mantle of the Expert approach as curriculum ‘incorporation’ rather than ‘integration’ as a way of questioning the very constructs that present curriculum as discrete subject areas (Abbott, 2009). Such approaches are based in the integrative workings of the aesthetic as a mode of cognition, and are termed “substantive curriculum integration” by Marshall (2005), who provides the following definition:

Substantive integration…involves making conceptual connections that underlie art and other disciplines. It reveals something of the core principles, structures, and practices of fields by moving beyond the most concrete level (depicting subject matters particular to disciplines), to a more abstract level (tapping into the concepts that underlie the disciplines addressed) to the most profound and conceptual level (revealing concepts that are common to art, the disciplines with which it is integrated, and the mind in general) (pp. 228-229).

Our hypothesis at the start of this project was that the major driver of integration for teachers and pupils would be the need to solve specific problems of useful knowledge generation, that is, knowledge that would specifically provide content for each class’s allocated scene-devising task. However, the mode of integration was left to the teacher to choose.

Whilst there is a substantial literature on the value of integrated learning, there appears to be very little research into teacher’s experience of the school production, despite its being a
commonplace occurrence in schools around the world. In the New Zealand context, Moreland and Cowie (2007) have investigated the successful teaching of mask-making as contributing to successful participation in a school production, but this study was limited to the context of a particular learning area (Technology). One can find personalized and/or anecdotal accounts of one or more teachers’ production experiences (for example, Hayes, 1999; Swann, 2003; Aiello, 2008) and ‘how-to’s (Gavelis, Erez, Galbraith, Haddrick, Robert, Rossini, Saltar & Zeigler, 2007), but little that investigates systematically the experience of being involved in the devising of a significant, school production, particularly at primary level. Swick’s (1999) thoughtful analysis of the lived experience of the teacher in a devised school production offers relevant comments on the difficulties of handing over decision-making power to the children involved, though her perspective is gleaned from working with senior students in a high school context. Another study by Gershman investigates the day-by-day processes of a school drama production, covering a large range of production aspects. Once again, however, this is a high school drama context (Gershman, 1990). Our searches located no research studies looking at a generalist primary teacher’s experience with devised work.

It may be worth considering for a moment why this lack exists. One Canadian commentator, Lang (2002) comments, that one confusing element may be the multiplicity of terms used by teachers to describe devising: “playbuilding”, “devising” or her preferred term “collective creation”. Lang suggests that perhaps the studies are out there, but hard to find:

Although it appears that little research has been done in this area, the actual number of research studies that have been done may be masked by the plethora of terms that drama educators and theatre specialists have used to describe the process…. Perhaps we drama educators can also agree upon common terms for similar practices within this discourse so that we understand each other when we are talking about the same thing! (Lang, p. 50)

Another possible reason for the gap in the literature may be the historical tendency to draw a sharp distinction between classroom drama practices and drama for performance. As Fleming (2003) points out, teachers advocating for the vital place of drama in the classroom have historically felt the need to dissociate themselves from performance, creating something of a schism between theatre-based approaches and process-based approaches (Fleming, 2003, p.19). Or perhaps the gap in the literature results from a questioning amongst “serious” drama education or theatre researchers of the quality and validity of primary school productions as objects of study? Whatever the reason, it does seem surprising that a phenomenon as ubiquitous as the primary school production would not have fuller coverage in the research literature. This paper goes some way towards addressing this gap by offering a preliminary study of teachers’ experience of devising at primary level.

Teachers’ views on curriculum integration

In the pre-production questionnaire, teachers were asked to identify whether they used curriculum integration in their practice, and to explain their understanding of the term. All teachers noted they had used curriculum integration a number of times in the past. The most commonly integrated curriculum learning areas mentioned were English and Social Science/Social Studies (mentioned by all) with Maths, Science and Visual Art mentioned twice and Sustainability, Health and Drama once each. For these teachers, then, integration
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was a familiar and positive concept, and seen as encompassing learning across the curriculum.

At first sight, teachers’ definitions of integration appeared to be very similar. All four classroom teachers offered a definition that used the word “topic” or “theme”, suggesting a general view of integration at the “thematic” end of the spectrum of integration models described previously. However, other language choices showed some variance in teachers’ conceptions. Pauline described integration as about “covering a variety of curriculum areas under a single topic”, while Ingrid talked about “bringing [subjects] together under an umbrella”. Such definitions suggest a thematic understanding of integration (Beane, 1995). However, for Rachel, the integration process meant “intertwining” curriculum areas and for Lynette it meant “link making”. Such language choices position these teachers as nearer the “substantive” model of integration (Marshall, 2005). Even further along the spectrum, Ingrid and Rachel both hint at “conceptual” and “cognitive” aspects when they suggest that integration makes learning more “meaningful” for children.

Lynette, Wanda and Rachel all refer to teaching “globally”, by addressing big picture issues and bringing these into the classroom, while Rachel further hints at the possible shifts in teacher-student relationship that can occur in integration, stating that “the teacher becomes a facilitator”. For Wanda, integration “means collapsing arbitrary boundaries between traditional subject areas”, implying a critique of customary classroom practices that are not integrative. Within these teacher’s responses, then, are subtly differing conceptualisations of integration and the teacher’s role within that.

At the end of the production process, teachers were invited to consider whether their understanding of integration had changed. All classroom teachers stated clearly that their view of integration was not altered by the experience. Indeed, Ingrid described the process rather as “a great opportunity to practice what you knew – yeah”. On the face of it, teachers continued to feel positive about integration and secure in their practice of it. All teachers described the integration process during production as a natural and easy way to teach. In Lynette’s words:

It was quite easy to integrate….we had the big idea, we were stepping up in different ways, creatively in the arts. And also, I mean, it was all English, it was Social Studies, History, Music, Drama – it all just fitted in together very easily. So it wasn’t difficult, it just happened.

Two teachers suggested that though they had not learned anything new, the experience had enriched their appreciation of the place of drama and performance in integration. Ingrid stated clearly that, “I understand how beautifully basing a production on inquiry, especially one so localised as we did, involves so much integration across the curriculum.” Lynette’s comments also showed a new appreciation, not for integration per se but for the place of drama as a tool within integration: “I can really see the benefit of drama as a means of going deeper into a subject – bringing history to life.”

Though, when asked directly, teachers claimed not to have changed in their understandings of curriculum integration and to have found the integration process “easy”, we sensed that their responses to other questions indicated that they were challenged to new understandings about the actual requirements of integrating through drama, which was for some of them a new learning area. For example, Rachel mentioned the difficulty of translating researched material
about Dalmatian settlers into a scene, “trying to work out how you were going to make a quick scene out of a whole lifestyle and nothing actually tangible”. Both Pauline and Rachel identified the enormous struggle of scripting a scene and doing it with integrity “so there was some element of truth to what we were doing”. Some teachers related this to the workshop run by the second author. Lynnete noted:

I learned … after the workshop, we had to have conflict – we had to have a rising tension and we had to have a bit of humour sometimes, so it was putting all those elements together and thinking of the audience and thinking the best way to explain it to an audience as well in simple terms and also in children’s terms.

Ingrid also mentioned her struggles and the steep “learning curve” involved with “the actual putting the scene together and the acting of it”. So, when asked directly whether they changed their understanding of integration, teachers replied in the negative – apparently keen to affirm an ongoing commitment to integration as a concept. When asked more specifically about their challenges, teachers revealed a struggle with the practicalities of how to integrate in a new way, through drama process and performance.

A divergent view was expressed by the music specialist, Wanda, who indicated some doubt whether possibilities for full integration were actually being explored within classrooms. “I was still at times hearing people say things like ‘well learning’s still got to go on,’ which suggested to her that colleagues did not see the learning growing out of the work on the production as providing “real” learning in the broadest sense of integration. The classroom teachers did not directly state such a view during interviews but there was some suggestion of it. Several talked about the impossibility of maintaining normal classroom programmes during production – implying a belief that such routines are necessary for “real” learning to occur. Rachel stated:

Much as [the production] was – we knew it was a huge part for the term, there is still your maths, there is still your reading groups you need to have and all those bits, but in the back of your head you’ve got, “ok, we’ve got production” … you’ve got your timeline, trying to balance that with class life.

Lynette too, expressed some concern that “some children [who] need a lot more structure, of course got nothing achieved in that time”. If, as these statements imply, teachers felt a pressure to add the production to their normal classroom practice, rather than substitute it, this would be expected to generate a sense of professional overload. If, on the other hand, there was an acceptance that benefits such as resilience, confidence, social bonding and learning in music and drama might be of equal learning value to the “work” that normally happens in the classroom, this might have suggested teachers shifting more towards the substantive end of the spectrum of integration, where the dissolving of barriers between curriculum areas and the renegotiation of teacher roles are valued as beneficial conditions for learning. Lynette appeared to be approaching this when she said: “They all gained so much that it didn’t become a problem, it didn’t become a concern to me.”

Post production, teachers suggested that English and drama were the key areas they had integrated (mentioned by all four classroom teachers). Three mentioned music, whilst social sciences, dance and art were mentioned by two. Just one mentioned technology. No mention
was made of the curriculum learning areas of health and PE, Maths, science or languages. All teachers commented on the quality of music learning, for example: “The music was absolutely fabulous and that reflected all the work that had gone into that and that was very, very obvious … there were children that shone.” Overall, the production was seen as supporting deep learning in the arts and social sciences. However, no comment was made about how other learning areas might have been integrated. As suggested, teachers appeared to consider these areas to be the provenance of the ongoing classroom practice, or to be “on hold” through the production. Lynette made the important observation that though the production demonstrated a broad sweep of learning about the valley, this represented the collective learning of a range of classes, not a breadth of knowledge acquired by each child. After all, “not all children learned about what ended up in the production”. Equally, the production did not reflect all the learning that had gone on in the inquiry phase. The process and the product, it seems, were valuable in different ways and represented and showcased different kinds of learning.

Inquiry-Based learning as the basis for devised performance

All four classroom teachers saw educational value for children in the production process, particularly the initial process of inquiry on which the scenes were based. Lynette believed children had learned a lot about the history of the area through their independent research. She put this down to the level of engagement and attention to detail shown in the research (illustrated by the working model of a kauri dam created by one student) and the use of drama and in-role writing.

They learned a lot about gum diggers and…putting themselves in their shoes. How would you feel, you’re in the mud up to here and all that sort of thing. And they’re seeing things from a different perspective, which they’ve not done before.

Rachel, too, considered that the children found out quite a lot about the valley, though she felt that the younger children in her class “switched off” a little from the historical talks. For her children, the real learning about history seemed to happen through the use of visual images.

I’m realising with the younger ones obviously, they don’t have that past knowledge, they can’t build a picture in their head…and so I printed out pictures…I showed them pictures of what hippies looked like a they went “oh”.

Rachel also found that visual triggers helped the children deepen their understanding through dramatic character play. “They weren’t in costume until the very end…Maybe they should have had a piece of costume to work with all the way through, just to shift them from being the everyday person to that character.” For both these teachers, then, an exploration of role deepened the learning by making it experiential. For them, the process of inquiry was intimately bound up in the process of devising.

A key theme to emerge from the interview data was the struggles to balance teacher and student input/ownership of both the inquiry process and the process of devising the scene for production. All teachers mentioned the level of student ownership engendered by the inquiry process and appeared to value this as something they wished to carry through to the devising phase, though, as will be seen, this was sometimes hard to achieve in practice. In fact, all
teachers struggled to maximise student ownership of the work in the transition from inquiry mode to devising for performance. Teachers’ deeply held ideals about student ownership were difficult for some to sustain in the face of the reality of the new and scary process of devising, especially given the constraints of time and concerns about “quality”. In the event, each teacher dealt with the struggle somewhat differently.

Ingrid, for example, preferred to teach in a “hands off” way. In the brainstorming phase, she “threw it over to them” [the children]. For casting, too, she supported student ownership of the process: “Some students put their hands up and said I’d like to have a go at that and if they were basically reasonably strong…I left them to it.” Even in the scripting process, Ingrid appears to have minimised her input: “Their ideas….I didn’t do too much to them. I just kept them and then put them into more of a coherent timeframe so it all made a bit of sense.” Ingrid’s own characterisation of her approach was self-deprecating, suggesting her lack of direct guidance was a result of her not knowing what she was doing. However, her overall stance favoured children being supported to do things for themselves. Here, for example, she talks about children developing into their characters and describes this occurring as a combination of direction from herself, Terry’s [second author’s] support and innate ability: “There was a point where they suddenly got into the characters and I don’t know that it was…a little bit of it was my direction and a little bit of it was Terry listened to them and a little bit was that…you know, it was kind of a natural thing as well.” For Ingrid, then, the teacher’s role was to offer support, guidance and help with the synthesizing of ideas.

Lynette managed the matter of student ownership differently. She characterized the devising process as something that started with the children but was ultimately, of necessity, taken back by the teacher.

Out of those enquiry research questions that they [the children] did, we developed some of the script. And when I say, “we developed some of the script”, initially we did it with the children but in the end because of the time it became a staff finishing-off of the script.

Time is stated as a key reason for teacher intervention together with the quality factor: “We consulted with the children because they wanted high impact drama with a lot of action and then we had to tweak it slightly to make it work.” Elsewhere, she mentions how challenging it was to work with the stylistic variations within children’s writing: “They all wrote in different ways…of course, the boys wanted to see action and fighting and that sort of thing…so you just had to sort of work with that sort of child level of thought.” For Lynette, then, student ownership was critical at the start of the process and then her role as teacher was to step in and provide an aesthetic consolidation, so that an effective performance could happen.

Rachel worked very closely with Lynette during the scripting process and, similarly, positioned herself as a “consolidator” of children’s ideas. In the inquiry phase, students were encouraged to go “off on their little tangents”. She viewed student ownership of ideas and flexibility as crucial at this stage: “Because with enquiry, you can’t have it so specific that you’ve got to learn this and you’ve got to research this.” However, Rachel differed from the “hands off” approach of Ingrid. She saw her students as needing support in learning to learn through inquiry and as not having had enough of this: “There was a little bit of confusion, because there wasn’t the direction they actually needed….They hadn’t done a lot of work on
enquiry, whereas last year we had looked at questioning and researching and presentation. They were thrown in the deep end.” Like Lynette, Rachel eventually wrote the script based on the children’s work and the commonalities of interest within the class. Rachel also emphasised the importance of doing the history justice within the scene she was writing. In her view, *honouring* the history was an adult role. She noted that children may have “switched off” during the historical talks they attended but “the teachers were interested….so trying to make sure we tied it in so there was some element of truth to what we were doing”.

Re student ownership, then, Rachel appeared to prioritize this within the initial inquiry phase, with the teacher assuming ownership in the scripting phase.

Pauline’s approach to the devising process was also rather teacher-reliant. She had initially wanted to give children ownership and saw this as important in principle. However, she ended up assuming a rather directive role in the scripting. She admitted this might have been because she lacked confidence in the process: “The hardest thing was I didn’t know where to start….We had studied about the Orpheus and we knew the legend of Mokoroa, but then how to actually turn that into a scene with a whole class was really, really difficult.” Like other teachers, Pauline wanted to give students ownership and control over the form of the performance, but found that they struggled. “I tried to get the kids to write the scripts….it was really good that they had a chance to get a go but that didn’t really work so then I had to rewrite it.” She acknowledged that the amount of teacher input she ended up giving was at odds with her initial intention of giving children ownership. “A couple of them got a little bit upset because they quite liked their scene but I changed them. So that was a bit of a hindrance.”

Another theme to emerge was the valuable social, interpersonal or intrapersonal learning that occurred for the children – what could be described as learning in the Key Competencies (Ministry of Education, 2007). For example, Lynette identified two students who were not often popular but had shone in their particular groups within the performance. “They’ve gone out there and they’ve done something well and they’ve been appreciated and I think it’s been really, really good for them.” Rachel talked about the powerful support children offered each other: “I’ve got one girl in my class who has really low social ability…, and all the kids just picked her up and helped her along, made sure she was in the right place and that was really nice.” Rachel also noticed how to some extent there was a power shift as students relied on and listened to their peers even more than the teachers.

’Cause you can stand up there till you are blue in the face saying, “Do it like this,” and they go…and their friend walks along and they go, “Just do it like this.” And you’re [thinking], ‘Didn’t I just say that?’ But they do it, you know. They work with each other really well.

For Pauline, the rehearsal process tested many children in the key competency of “Managing Self”: “They were given a whole lot of work and they had to manage what they did and when they did and how they did it so some of them did it really well and some of them didn’t unfortunately.”

Although each teacher went through the same overall pattern of moving from inquiry mode to devising, teachers developed their own processes for doing this. The chart below, based on teacher interviews, summarizes the process from inquiry to devising that was used by each teacher. Wanda’s process is distinct from the others, since she was not a classroom teacher.
At the bottom of the table is a statement from each teacher, selected as loosely representing each teacher’s approach or philosophy.

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<th>Lynette</th>
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<td>Story used as trigger</td>
<td>Structure produced by the staff</td>
<td>Children’s ideas</td>
<td>Study and research</td>
<td>Guiding metaphors (school wide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>Class discussion</td>
<td>Inquiry – lots of tangents</td>
<td>Grouped children</td>
<td>Original compositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripting by children</td>
<td>Broken down into areas of interest</td>
<td>Teachers wrote script – chose focus, climax.</td>
<td>Brainstorms</td>
<td>Working on Interludes, whilst teachers carry out inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking / reading</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Casting</td>
<td>Mini scenes by children</td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trialling by children</td>
<td>Script (children)</td>
<td>Direction, costume etc</td>
<td>Rewritten by adults</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher refinements</td>
<td>Adults finish script</td>
<td>Disorganised stage – stressful – then came together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I filled in the gaps in terms of their own collective knowledge”

“I allowed them off on their own tangents, then guided them back to a focus”

“It’s about making commonalities are”

“I had to go through and re-write them (children) will come up with it”

“You don’t need to worry about not having the stuff, because they (the children) will come up with it”

Table 1: Teachers’ approaches to the inquiry/devising process

The findings from the interviews were largely echoed in the pre- and post-production questionnaires (see Appendix 1). Here, teachers were asked to consider the relative importance of a range of different teaching roles in the production process. The roles of “Skills coach”, “Learning facilitator”, “Demonstrator”, “Motivator”, “Creative designer”, “Script writer” and “Organiser” were identified and described briefly to ensure a shared understanding of the question. Teachers were asked before the production process how important they expected the roles to be in their work with children. They answered by circling a number between 1 and 5 (from 1 “unimportant” to 5 “extremely important”). After
the production they were asked again to indicate how important they had found the different roles to be (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE Production</th>
<th>Skills coach</th>
<th>Learning facilitator</th>
<th>Demonstrator</th>
<th>Motivator</th>
<th>Creative designer</th>
<th>Script writer</th>
<th>Organiser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanda</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingrid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynette</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POST Production</th>
<th>Skills coach</th>
<th>Learning facilitator</th>
<th>Demonstrator</th>
<th>Motivator</th>
<th>Creative designer</th>
<th>Script writer</th>
<th>Organiser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanda</td>
<td>(no questionnaire completed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingrid</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynette</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Results of pre- and post-production questionnaire on teacher roles

These results suggest all teachers went into the process believing that all seven of the specified roles were significant. No one circled 1 (unimportant) for any role and there is only once instance of a 2 being circled. Wanda (music specialist) did not complete a post-production questionnaire so her pre- and post- responses cannot be compared.

In terms of shifts of rankings by individual teachers between pre- and post-, if shifts of over 1.0 are taken as significant, then Lynette and Ingrid remained fairly constant in their ranking of all the roles, whilst Rachel marked a shift in her sense of the importance of the “Motivator” role (from 3 to 5). The most striking individual shift came from Pauline, whose ranking of the importance of “Scriptwriter” role shifted 3 places (from 2 to 5). This is consistent with the anxiety she felt about this role, and the degree to which she ended up taking over scriptwriting from the children.
Figure 1: Comparing pre- and post-production role rankings

Figure 1 shows the mean averages of teacher rankings for each role, taken across the sample. The pre-production mean (top bar) is shown against the post-production mean (bottom bar) for each question. At the start of the process, the highest significance overall was considered to be the role of “Learning Facilitator” (4.8 mean) whilst the lowest significance was given to script writing (3.3 mean). Post-production means continue to show “Learning facilitator” as having a high importance (4.25), though the figure has gone down a little. The roles of “Scriptwriter” and “Organiser” show the greatest shift in importance (moving up from 3.3 to 4.25 and 3.8 to 4.5 respectively). It would seem that, without any significant loss in the priority given to other roles, these teachers came to consider that pragmatic organisational aspects and the shaping of the dramatized event through script-writing took on more importance than they had earlier anticipated.

What teachers found helpful in the process

Two teachers asserted that when building a scene, it felt easier to work from a particular event or story than to build from a theme. Ingrid mentioned reading a novel to her class to hook them in, while Lynette said: “In the scenes like the Orpheus, there was something to write about it. It already had a structure; they just had to break it down.” Two teachers mentioned Terry’s workshop on script/scene development as having been helpful in addressing their lack of confidence. Ingrid comments: “I had not had any experience in scriptwriting before so I basically followed a bit of an outline we’d gone through with him.” Lynette noted that Terry’s workshop assisted her in structuring the scenes.

I learnt that we…had to have conflict. We had to have rising tension and we had to have a bit of humour sometimes. So it was putting all those elements together and thinking of the audience…

For these teachers, then, there was some security in having a framework or structure to follow, either from a story or from a theoretical framework of what an effective scene requires.

Another process aspect mentioned by teachers as contributing to its success, was the use of professional actors from the local community as expert mentors / assistants in the production. Wanda talked about these actors as “angels” and repeatedly mentioned their positivity and ability to stay calm under pressure. Ingrid suggested that other teachers wanting to try a
similar project needed to “pull in your experts”. She mentioned how one of the mentors helped her make a scene work. “She just stepped in and I said, ‘Look I just don’t think its working and it’s not how I envisaged it.’ …and at the very last minute she put energy into it and that really helped.” It appears that this mentor’s support skillfully built on Ingrid’s own work rather than undermining her sense of ownership over the scene. The implication is that the “expert” one “pulls in” needs to have skill and tact in how to offer support.

Another crucial success factor identified was the degree of collaboration between students, teachers and the wider school. Ingrid noted how children in the cast supported each other throughout: “You could see there were…moments when they became the characters and that was really lovely and the strength of each one of them as they…turned into their characters supported the others.” A similar sense of collaboration and teamwork was experienced amongst the teachers. Rachel stated:

It was quite cool in the fact we were working as a team….We did support each other because we knew what everyone was going through; and you do have your other teachers that do step up and help in other areas….

The sense of collaboration extended beyond the group of teachers directly involved to the wider school community. Susan noted that, “Everyone helped out. I mean, the people who helped with the costumes did a fantastic job and none of them actually had kids in the show; the people who did the props and looking after our kids…..” Wanda also commented about the support from school management and its importance to the success of the venture: “I think what’s crucial is the ownership by the whole school and the generosity of teachers.”

What teachers found challenging or constraining in the process

Some teachers would have preferred time to pre-teach some of the skills of inquiry and drama that the children needed for the production. As mentioned previously, Rachel mentioned that the children would have benefited with more support in inquiry skills. Ingrid identified a need for pre-teaching drama skills: “I think we could have done a lot more drama work that would have supported them as a whole class.” Ingrid also suggested that it might have been good to give students more “groundwork” in drama by taking them to see other productions.

Classroom teachers also mentioned the inhibiting effect of their own lack of skills and knowledge in drama. As mentioned earlier, Rachel and Pauline both specified script-writing as something they felt very uncertain about. Pauline admitted she coped with the uncertainty by putting off the scriptwriting process as long as possible, The one teacher not to report feeling constrained by lack of skills was Wanda, the specialist music teacher, for whom the process of devising a performance was more familiar, perhaps because of the role improvisation plays in the ongoing school music programme.

As well as feeling insecure about her drama skills, one teacher, Rachel, mentioned feeling disadvantaged by her own lack of knowledge about the local history on which the scenes were to be based. “I found it hard being about the history, when we don’t have a lot to do with the history of the valley.” Other teachers appeared more secure about the historical content, having spent time learning it alongside the children. Wanda considered that in terms of the music, she could trust the children to come up with the content. “Once you have got a
framework and you’ve put in the preparation work as a teacher in terms of the structure…you don’t need to worry about not having the stuff because they will come up with it.” Ironically, the one classroom teacher (Ingrid) who did feel secure in the content she had to work with did not find this familiarity ensured an easy creative process. In fact, Ingrid spoke of how the familiarity of her material led to her underestimating the time the creative process would take:

The last scene was the one where we were showcasing what we did at Woody Valley today… and I thought that would be really easy because it’s something that I’m passionate about [as] the educational sustainability teacher. But in fact what happened was I didn’t allow enough time….I felt all along that we were on the back foot…it just wasn’t really bubbling.

It would seem, then, that struggles with content were possible whether the material was familiar or not. Of crucial importance was the time needed for the creative process.

All teachers mentioned that the production process needed more time and seemed rushed. Lack of time and the resultant stress was a significant theme in the data. Ingrid exclaimed: “Time, time…not allowing enough time for the process!” Lynette and Rachel found themselves working over weekends to complete scripting “in the interests of time”. Pauline remarked that she did not consider the process started early enough: “I learned that you have to start really, really early and you’ve got to be really well organised or it doesn’t work too well.” Wanda, too, conceded that a longer time frame might have been useful: “I think now we almost need to start thinking about what the next show will be and then twelve months before put all the things in place; because really there’s no way that you put that together in a term – there’s so much…”.

Another stressor was the level of disruption experienced by teachers who took leadership roles in the production. For the two teachers who took director roles (Lynette and Rachel), there was a particularly high level of disruption as the children in their classes spent two or three days split between other classes, or else carrying out set work at the back of the rehearsal hall. Lynette found positives in this experience. “Our whole theme last term was ‘stepping up’, so they [children] had to learn how to step up in different ways – one of them was how to behave when they had all these disruptions to normal school life. And they did that really well in the end.” For other teachers, this aspect of the production process would be improved with extra staffing support. Lynette suggested, “We sort of felt it could have been supported better. Even if we paid relievers to keep the kids in the class and keep a semblance going of a normal programme.” For other teachers the disruption to routine was unwelcome and seemed unreasonable. Pauline admitted, “I just found it hard the whole way through… hard and really stressful. I mean, it did end up a really good show and the kids really enjoyed it, but the amount of stress on everyone was unbelievable.”

The level of personal and professional stress experienced by teachers certainly seems to have been significant. All teachers touched on this, particularly in interviews, where they talked honestly and with striking self-awareness about the intense emotions and personality differences that had emerged amongst the staff. As one put it, “We had tears, we had a bit of yelling and that sort of thing.” Chief causes of the stress were: the sense of pressure from working to a tight timeframe; uncertainty and anxiety about the open-ended nature of the creative process; professional overload caused by trying to manage the production on top of
existing classroom routines; long hours put in outside of school time leading to physical and emotional tiredness; and personality differences leading to relational strain among members of the team. The lack of time led to teachers working long hours and experiencing a lack of sleep, exhaustion and a sacrificing of their own well being. Rachel recalled dreaming about the production at night time: “It just consumed everything that you did”, and described the hardest thing as “just general[ly] being tired. Everyone’s – the kids are getting tired, we’re getting tired, we’re like ‘Come on, we’ve just got to keep going!’ That was really hard!”

As researchers, we were struck by how honest and self-reflective these teachers were prepared to be about the emotional journey they had been on. They saw the emotional challenges as something to reflect on and learn from and, indeed, during the interviews, each individual offered a reflective insight into their own learning from the process. Asked what they had learned about themselves from the production process, each teacher offered something quite different. It seemed they became stressed at different times in the process and about different things. Pauline could see that, I don’t cope with stress very well….I don’t like it when it’s disorganised. I like to know what’s happening and when it’s happening and how it’s happening and it was quite difficult for me to cope with these things.

I don’t cope with stress very well….I don’t like it when it’s disorganised. I like to know what’s happening and when it’s happening and how it’s happening and it was quite difficult for me to cope with these things.

For Rachel the learning had been almost the opposite, “I learned that under pressure I handle it much better: if leading up to it there’s not enough pressure happening I get stressed that things aren’t going to work…”. Wanda recognised her own need for positive energy in the creative process, and acknowledged that in insisting on this from others, “I maybe spoke too firmly,” and said, “be positive – you know, being negative is going to get you nowhere…” Wanda also recognised a tendency to assume a common vision when this might not be shared by others: “I tend to assume that what’s in my head is in everyone else’s head.” For Ingrid, the learning was about everyone recognizing that “you are part of the process and not running it… one of many people involved”. From her point of view, “there was possibly not enough listening going on, and reflection and support and appreciation” and this was something she would like to improve another time. Lynette, meanwhile, found herself in the unexpected role of pacifier: “Everyone came to me with a problem – not just about the show but about each other. That was interesting…trying to be tactful and see things from both sides.” Lynette stated that her key learning from the whole project was about “an interesting interplay of relationships with the adults” and it seems this was true for everyone involved.

All teachers acknowledged that the personal stresses would be likely to be much reduced in future projects. As Pauline put it, “The first time obviously is going to be the worst; if we were going to do it again…we know a lot more about how to do it and how to organise it and when to start…. All teachers agreed that in future it would be helpful to have clearer job descriptions and one or two people with overall responsibility for the production. As Rachel said, I don’t think I’d have as many in charge…a couple of people with a clear idea of what’s going to happen, and then take it from there. It was really nice having so many teachers’ input and four different lots of scripts happening, but it got quite confusing and it really stressed a lot of people out.
Ingrid agreed: “There wasn’t anyone that was from the beginning appointed to take over the directorship of it… I think we needed to have more clearly defined roles from the beginning.” It is worth noting that one of the successes of the project was the way the staff defined roles amongst the children in the school, as Lynette described: “We set up roles and responsibilities for each class, on a class list and we checked that each child had a role, or more than one role … so they could say ‘I was the [this] character,’ or ‘I helped do props in the second half,’ and all feel good about it.” It would appear that a similarly conscious, schematised system to clarify and maximise participation might have been something the teachers would have benefitted from themselves.

As well as clearly defined job descriptions for staff, all teachers agreed that it would be beneficial to have one person in charge. Pauline put it this way:

Maybe if one person could take charge from the beginning, and work with the teachers developing their scenes, so they know where they are heading and they know where everyone is up to and it just needed to be pulled together by one person, I think.

As music specialist, Wanda agreed that an agreed overseer figure would help avoid confusion over leadership: “You just perhaps need one person, a kind of caregiver of the whole thing, who is nurturing the people along who are getting upset.” Or alternatively, “Either you make sure you know there’s one person who is going to play that role…or you really are confident when you go in that you’ve got a team that can manage themselves.” Along with more clearly defined leadership, Wanda also considered that professional development for staff on how to work together collaboratively would be a good investment of time, even before the creative process began: “Effective team building and good leadership around appropriate processes would make a huge difference and I would definitely…do that differently.”

Discussion and conclusion

For the teachers involved in this project, there were many benefits, learnings and challenges involved in mounting an integrated, inquiry-based school production. Teachers extended their curriculum knowledge, especially in drama, developed their own understanding of the local environment and its stories and were able to see previously unrecognised abilities in their students. They also experienced tensions related to the desire for student ownership (“real” inquiry) and the demands of quality and focus required for a whole class scene. We suggest, too, that teachers also struggled (though they may not have done so consciously) with their conceptions of integration and inquiry.

Implications that other teachers might draw from this case include the following:

- The need for extended time for devising original work;
- The benefits of clear job descriptions for adults involved, and of clear leadership;
- Benefits of professional development in drama (both process and devising strategies and scriptwriting);
- Benefits of involvement by outside professional experts as mentors;
- The value of visual triggers such as pictures, or costume items;
- The value of stories as starting points for dramatic scenes.
We find that teachers in this case study were mostly operating within a thematic understanding of integration. Professional development or further praxis might result in a shift towards “substantive” paradigms in which the production is seen as a primary site for learning. This in turn might lead to a recognition of possibilities for sites of teaching and learning outside of the familiar, timetabled classroom routine.

Perhaps most striking of all for the teachers involved in this study are the implications about the potential for intra and inter-personal learning arising from creative risk-taking and collaboration. The teachers in this study, alongside their students, learned as much about themselves and each other as they did about the history of Woody Valley. With the New Zealand curriculum’s emphasis on key competencies, value and community, the value of this kind of experience cannot be overlooked.

It is clear that for these teachers, the process was a stressful and demanding one in which they grappled with the emotional, relational and time demands of the collaborative creative process. The open-endedness and uncertainty of the creative process was difficult for some, particularly those for whom it was unfamiliar. This is in line with what the literature describes, and re-emphasises the need for professional development and support in this area.

REFERENCES


Brough, C. (2010). Student-centred curriculum integration in action: “I was wondering if you could tell me how much one meat patty and one sausage costs?” SET, 3, 9-14.


[i] Pseudonyms have been used throughout to protect the anonymity of the school and participants.

[ii] The tangata whenua for the area is Te Kawerau a Maki.


[iv] In fact, one of the classes was a Year 4/5 composite.

**Appendix 1: Teacher questionnaires**

**Prior to the production: Initial questionnaire for teachers**

1. Please write a brief paragraphing explaining your understanding of what “curriculum integration” means.
2. Have you ever designed a unit of work that you would describe as an example of curriculum integration? Circle **Yes** or **No**
3. If your answer to Question 2 was Yes please tell us briefly what curriculum or learning areas were integrated in your unit of work.
4. Please write a brief paragraphing explaining your understanding of what “inquiry-based learning” means.
5. Have you ever designed a unit of work that you would describe as an example of inquiry-based learning? Circle Yes or No

6. If your answer to Question 5 was Yes, please tell us briefly what the topic was of a unit you designed where inquiry-based learning played a major part.

7. This question asks you to use a rating scale from 1-5. 1 means “unimportant” and 5 means “very important”. Please circle the number in the scale below that describes how important inquiry-based learning is in your teaching with your current class: 1 2 3 4 5

8. This question is about the role you expect to play as a teacher working with your class as they prepare their scenes for the school production. (We know that teachers can take on all sorts of roles in the classroom.) In the table below are listed a range of “teacher roles”. For each role there is a rating scale. Again, 1 means “unimportant” and 5 means “very important”. We are asking you to rate how important you expect each of these roles to be as you work with your students on their contribution to the production. Circle the appropriate number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible role as teacher</th>
<th>How important you expect this role to be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills coach (In this role, you train your students in a range of relevant skills)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning facilitator (In this role, you identify a range of learning intentions or objectives and design activities to help students attain these objectives)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrator (In this role, you show students how to do a range of appropriate tasks).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivator (In this role, you engage in practices to “fire up” your students).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative designer (In this role, you engage in creative problem-solving yourself in the way your teach)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Script-writer (In this role, you play a significant role in shaping a dramatized event or performance)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organiser (In this role, you are establishing procedures, preparing resources, planning, setting dates, etc)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Please state briefly what your hopes are for yourself as a result of being involved in this production experience with your class.
10. Please state briefly what your hopes are for your class as a result of their being involved in this production experience.

11. Please list any fears/anxieties you have about being involved in this production project.

**Post production**

1. Please write a brief paragraph explaining how your understanding of “curriculum integration” has changed (if at all) as a result of your involvement in the production.

2. In the lead-up work you did to the school production, what curriculum areas did you integrate?

3. Please write a brief paragraph explaining how your understanding of “inquiry-based learning” has changed (if at all) as a result of your involvement in the production.

4. This question is about the various roles you may have played as a teacher working with your class as they prepared their scenes for the school production. In the table below are listed a range of “teacher roles”. For each role there is a rating scale. Again, 1 means “unimportant” and 5 means “very important”. We are asking you to rate how important you found each of these roles to be as you worked with your students on their contribution to the production. Circle the appropriate number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible role as teacher</th>
<th>How important did you find this role to be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills coach (In this role, you train your students in a range of relevant skills)</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning facilitator (In this role, you identify a range of learning intentions or objectives and design activities to help students attain these objectives)</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrator (In this role, you show students how to do a range of appropriate tasks).</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivator (In this role, you engage in practices to “fire up” your students).</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative designer (In this role, you engage in creative problem-solving yourself in the way you teach)</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Script-writer (In this role, you play a significant role in shaping a dramatized event or performance)</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organiser (In this role, you are establishing procedures, preparing resources, planning, setting dates, etc)</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Post-production teacher interview questions

1. Would you mind telling me about the process you went through to prepare your class for the performance of their two scenes? What were the steps that you went through?
2. Were there certain key or crucial moments or events? Things that made a BIG difference to the success of this venture?
3. What were some of the key decisions that you made?
4. Were there hindrances? Things that made it hard for you and your students to get the job of preparing for the production actually done?
5. Would you mind sharing some of your own learnings in relation to the process of staging a devised dramatic performance?
6. Would you mind sharing some of your learnings in relation to the process of managing a curriculum integration process?
7. Would you mind sharing what you learnt in relation to the process of managing inquiry-based learning?
8. What are some tips you would offer to a teacher about to embark on a learning journey similar to the one you have undertaken with your class?
9. In your initial questionnaire, you expressed the following hopes for yourself? [complete] To what extent were these hopes realized? Or not realized? Can you offer reasons for this?
10. In your initial questionnaire, you expressed the following hopes for your pupils? [complete] To what extent were these hopes realized? Or not realized? Can you offer reasons for this?
11. What have you learnt about yourself as a result of this undertaking?
12. What was your experience of working with other people on this project?
13. What supports did you feel were in place in the school for you as a teacher engaged in this kind of project?
14. Would you have liked more or different support? Are there things that could have been done differently?

Appendix 3: The overall shape of the production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mokoroa: Guardian of the Valley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prologue</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student narration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scene 1: Rm 10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student narration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interlude 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student narration</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene 2: Rm 8</td>
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<td><strong>Student narration</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interlude 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Scene 3: Rm 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Interlude 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Scene 4: Rm 10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Interlude 4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Scene 5: Rm 10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Interlude 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>INTERVAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Scene 6: Rm 8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interlude 6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Scene 7: Rm 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Student narration</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interlude 7</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student narration</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scene 8: Rm At HVPS</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2

Student narration

Epilogue  “Care for the earth” in Te Reo and English song and instrumental piece

Biographies

Viv Aitken is Senior Lecturer in Drama in the Arts and Language Education department, Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato. Viv contributes to preservice programmes for primary and secondary teachers and supervises postgraduate research in drama education. Her research focuses on power and positioning within classroom drama and theatre. Email: viva@waikato.ac.nz

Terry Locke